

**VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MARKETS (AAFM)
VERMONT PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL (VPAC)
March 23, 2016 MEETING MINUTES**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bosworth, Sid
Gary, Lené
Giguere, Cary
Halman, Josh
Hazelrigg, Ann
Hoffman-Contois, Razelle
LaValley, Jenn (Admin)
Levey, Rick
Shively, Andy

MEMBERS ABSENT

Darrow, Casey
Palmer, Eric

GUESTS

Nat Shambaugh
Barbara Burnett

Meeting Called to Order

1:06 pm EST

Meeting Adjourned

4:40 pm EST

Announcements

- Minutes from the February 16, 2016 meeting were reviewed and approved (J. Halman moved, A. Hazelrigg seconded; 1 abstention due to absence). Final minutes will be posted to the VPAC SharePoint.
- Given increasing demands related to response to an emergent issue, Razelle reported that Cary has agreed AAFM will assist in compiling a draft summary of what the Council has learned during the recent intensive, updated review of vegetation management practices and options within railroad Rights-of-Way (ROWs). Council members were asked to share any components for incorporation with both Cary and Razelle. A draft, once assembled, will be provided to the Council for review.
- Razelle and others on the Council who have been involved in the North Bennington work provided a brief synopsis of efforts to date.
- Andy and Cary briefed the Council on proposed legislation that may be of interest. A brief description of H.861 which would expand Vermont's ability to restrict the use and sale of treated articles was provided. Cary reported on a bill that proposes establishment of a Pollinator Protection Committee and also on legislation proposing legalization of marijuana.
- Sid mentioned the recent Pollinator Summit. Those who attended noted no comprehensive take home message.
- Lené asked if Zika virus presents an increase in the potential for mosquito adulticide use in Vermont. Cary reported that as the vector species has not been documented this far north, based on current knowledge, he does not anticipate an increase in the potential need for adulticiding at present.

Public Comment

- Razelle reported that a journal article regarding concerns over the use of glyphosate based herbicides was received from Ms. Sylvia Knight and posted to the SharePoint under *Public Comments*.
- Ms. Barbara Burnett identified herself as a resident of Montpelier and expressed many concerns regarding the use of herbicides within railroad ROWs including potential exposure to herself and the community at large. She spoke about the manual weed control method used along a specific stretch of track in Montpelier in 2015. The Council was provided with a series of photographs she took of various track segments for reference. Ms. Burnett requested that herbicides not be permitted for use in this portion of the railroad ROW in 2016 and that a non-chemical means of vegetation control again be employed.

Business

Vegetation Control within Railroad Rights-of-Way

The Council continued discussion of vegetation control efforts within railroad ROWs in Vermont, in particular, along the portion of the Washington County line (part of the Vermont Rail System) that runs through a heavily populated area in downtown Montpelier. Rick shared a draft compilation of notes on uncertainties and challenges with regard to vegetation management in railroad ROWs based on notes from recent Council meetings and items noted by individual Council members. An extended discussion of this topic ensued. Razelle offered to share the results of a project she worked on with students in the University Of Vermont College Of Medicine the focus of which was to obtain a gauge on public awareness and perception of sources of pesticide exposure in Vermont. A survey instrument was developed and administered to over 200 Vermonters. Data were analyzed and summarized in a visually appealing poster that could potentially be useful in development of public outreach materials.

Razelle gave a brief overview of the ROW permit review process noting that there are three main entities: VTRANS, Utilities and Railroads. Cary described the railroad program in particular including, but not limited to, a description of two possible applications where the second run is designed for use in sensitive areas that are not treated with the products used in the first run.

Nat Shambaugh asked if the Council was considering establishing a pre-approved product list for use in railroad ROWs similar to the prescreen list that was developed years ago for golf courses. Razelle expressed that she has reservations about the Council doing so because the science changes so rapidly.

Brief discussion regarding glyphosate ensued. Cary raised the question as to whether there is a newer compound(s) better suited for use in sensitive areas for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, concern that increased uses of this active ingredient could have implications for potential increased public exposure and development of weed resistance.

Razelle provided a brief history of vegetation management activities within the railroad ROW that runs through downtown Montpelier and public concerns regarding use of herbicides in this area. A video display of minutes from the 2014 and 2015 annual ROW review meetings were used as a roadmap. Historic public concerns regarding use of herbicides in a portion of the railroad ROW in Norton were described.

Existing means of public notification and the status of the effort to have VT-ALERT in place as an option were discussed.

Next Meeting: May 11, 2016 9:30 am Montpelier National Life Main Building, Catamount Room N215